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# IF AMERICA ENTERS THE WAR

BY LORD NORTHCLIFFE

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WRITING at this date—in the month of July—it is quite impossible for a European to discern future American action in regard to the war. We know very little of the feelings of the whole of the United States toward this gigantic world upheaval. Our American friends who write to us are cordial and enthusiastic supporters of the Allies. Most of the newspapers on the Atlantic seaboard are obviously pro-Ally. But some of us who have more than a passing acquaintance with the great Republic understand that when an Englishman goes to the United States he naturally mingles with Americans of British descent, and it is these who have sent so many thousands of messages to us. Any one who has traveled through most of the United States, as I have, must realize the vast difficulty of arriving at anything approximate to a consensus of American opinion on the war, or any other topic. I assume, however, that seven American men and women out of ten are in sympathy with little Belgium. The superb generosity of the American people, who are preventing the Germans from starving the Belgians to death, is abundant proof of the sympathy of the majority of the people of the United States with the Belgian section of the Allies. It is possible that a great many are not in sympathy with England, or with Russia, or with France, or with Italy.

It always seems to me, therefore, that if the United States enters the war she will naturally devote her attention to the liberation of Belgium. It appears to me, too, that such a plan would have the additional merit of enthusiastically arousing the whole of the American people to their task. It would also give the American army, assuming such was raised, a definite work of its own, untrammelled by precedent

and free from the friction that would arise through its co-operation with armies speaking a different language or having entirely different traditions. It is certain that the American character and the American genius for invention would bring to bear on this war new ideas which the Americans would prefer to carry out in their own way. An American army would start with an enormous advantage over existing armies. It would have knowledge of the experiences and mistakes of the last year, and it would bring that invaluable essential, a new and clear eye, to bear on problems which have befogged those who have been over-concentrating for so long.

It is suggested in some American publications that the Allies, and particularly Great Britain, are anxious for American co-operation. I see cartoons in American newspapers suggesting that John Bull is holding out his hand appealingly to Uncle Sam in this conflict. If there be many people in England with that view I have not met them. We know that you are even less prepared than we were twelve months ago, and that in any case participation would not be possible for a long time ahead. We feel that the war is a European matter, and that the Canadians and Australians are involved only because the heart of their Empire has been struck at. Others of us think that if the United States entered the arena she would be so busy manufacturing munitions of war for herself that we should lose the valuable support she has been giving us in that direction. Again, there are others—I am quite frank, and the point of view has been urged upon me by prominent Frenchmen—who believe that German influence in the United States is so strong that when the settlement of the war comes to be made, American intervention, if it had taken place, might tend to the strengthening of Germany's hands at the peace conference.

But while I know of no active movement among the Allies to involve the United States in this world catastrophe, it is obvious that just as Germany blundered into a war with Great Britain, so it looks as if she were forcing the United States into the war. Americans who are now traveling in Germany are only too well aware of the hostility towards them that has been directly engendered by the Government. A careful perusal of the thousands of small German newspapers which answer to your "boiler-plate" country journals shows that the German Press Bureau has promoted a virulent anti-American propaganda. The leading newspa-

pers of the German Empire are sufficiently hostile to the United States, but I would draw American attention to the virulence of the Government-controlled minor organs, which are attacking the United States in exactly the same terms as those in which they attacked England, and in almost the same language as they used against Italy while she was deciding to take her part in the war.

The whole scheme is illustrative of the German miscalculation of the psychology of other nations. It is part and parcel of the modern German theory that people can be frightened into such attitude of mind as Germany may desire. These careful and laboriously engineered sneers at and attacks on the United States come from a people who believe that the Americans will not go to war, because to do so would injure American *business*. In this spirit, thousands of articles and pictures relating to "Herr Dollarman" are being circulated in Germany and Austria. I do not know who advises the German Government upon the American national character; but he bears a very heavy responsibility if he suggests that the United States will indefinitely submit to insult and humiliation. I have already expressed the opinion in American newspapers that Washington has displayed great dignity in the handling of its relations with the Germans. A lesser nation might have hurried into quick reprisal, but the Republic has always shown the leisured dignity and calm nerves which one expects from a hundred millions of people composed in the main of the best races in the world.

As to the maritime aspect of possible American intervention: I presume that the United States would immediately seize such German ships as are imprisoned in her harbors and use them as transports. For the rest, it is difficult to see in what way the United States with its present navy could very greatly help the Allies. The American submarine service would be able to demonstrate its efficiency only if the German warships came from their hiding, and at present there seems to be no indication of a willingness to emerge. The Germans would, I have no doubt, construct submarines capable of crossing the Atlantic, but they would probably be speedily dealt with by Americans through some of the means that we have already discovered for meeting the menace of the submarines. The American Fleet might co-operate with our Fleet in the

Mediterranean or join our Grand Fleet in the North Sea; but, as a matter of fact, we have absolute confidence in our navy, and feel that we shall be able to deal with the Germans at sea.

Of one thing I have very little doubt, and that is that if the United States should be goaded into this struggle she will see it through in the same way as on previous occasions. She will spare neither men nor money in that part of the struggle which she undertakes. She will show to the Germans that behind the fine American business brain is a soul that, as in the past, does not hesitate at the sacrifice of blood for the preservation of great ideals. If the Americans enter the war it will be with no sordid motive, with no idea of the acquisition of territory, but for the noble purpose of gaining freedom for those who are downtrodden and of showing to the world that citizenship of the United States is as inviolable as was that of Rome.

NORTHCLIFFE.